N64 MAGAZINE

THE NINTENDO 64 COMPENDIUM



EVERY UK RELEASE REVIEWED AND RATED

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO IMPORT GAMING

THE CREAM OF N64 PLAYING TIPS

The Nintendo 64 Compendium

Presented by



Written by **James Price**

Credits

N64 MAGAZINE'S THE NINTENDO 64 COMPENDIUM

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Contents

Welcome...

Welcome to the Nintendo 64 Compendium – the ultimate guide to gaming on your N64. Just because a game's not a brand new release, doesn't mean that it's still not great. Flicking through these pages you'll find plenty of titles worthy of your cash (and a couple to be avoided at all cost). If you want to expand your games library, there's everything you need to know right here.

Quite often in **N64** Magazine we talk about playing imported games from Japan and America. Starting on page 53 is a guide to getting started in the murky waters of 110 volts and NTSC televisions. The quality gap between European and NTSC releases is narrowing all the time, but if you've ever fancied being an import gamer than there's no better start than this.

James Ashton, Editor

Chapter one



The Games

Why might I want to buy this?

What will I like about it?

What won't I like?

1080° Snowboarding



Nintendo ● 89% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?
Because it's the best snowboarding game on any format, in the entire history of ever. Cynics may regard its real-life inspiration as a 'fad' and sneer accordingly, but *1080°*'s merit as a game, subject aside, is huge.

What will I like about it?
Its intuitive control system, for starters. And how does a varied collection of courses complement that? Rather nicely, we feel. Most importantly, it communicates a genuine feeling of weight and speed, something similar games fail to achieve.



What won't I like?
It's not the most 'immediate' of games – it takes time to get accustomed to – and the AI of its CPU-controlled opponents is arguably suspect.

Aero Fighters Assault

Konami ● 58% ● Shoot-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?
It allows you to fight simplified dogfights with planes. That, at least, is fairly unique on the N64...

What will I like about it?
Well, it's certainly a more action-packed brand of flight than the more surreal, esoteric *Pilotwings*.

What won't I like?
It's not very good. Ultimately, it's rather boring. And *Lylat Wars* it's not.

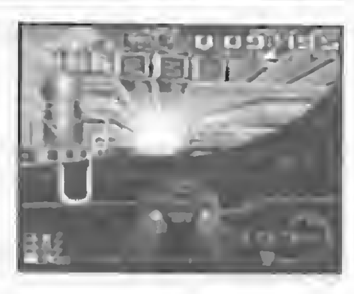


Aero Gauge

ASCII ● 10% ● Racing sim

Why might I want to buy this?

Frankly, you won't. A risible attempt at creating a *Wipeout* clone, *Aero Gauge* is to be avoided at all costs.



What will I like about it?

The thrill of non-ownership. It's a real buzz.

What won't I like?

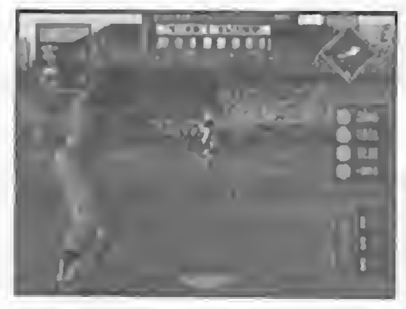
The horror of ownership. It's akin to waking to discover your face has melted.

All Star Baseball

Acclaim ● 84% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?

Because It's a damn good baseball sim. If you're a fan of the sport, you really can't go far wrong with this.



What will I like about it?

The realism, sumptuous visuals and, naturally, reams of stats on offer.

What won't I like?

If you have little or no interest in the real-life sport, you'll find it hard to enjoy – but this is more of a genre flaw.

Automobili Lamborghini

Titus ● 67% ● Racing sim

Why might I want to buy this?
It's a racing game with street courses.

What will I like about it?
It looks nice – although it's starting to show its age. And it's a racing game with an arcade emphasis, which means anyone can play it.

What won't I like?
The handling of the various cars. Eschewing realism for what appears to be an eccentric 'steer like a cow' setting, AL's an unpleasant racer to control at times. And, to be frank, it's very rarely exciting.

Banjo-Kazooie

Nintendo/Rare ● 92% ● Platform game

Why might I want to buy this?
Bar *Mario 64* – its mentor and inspiration – there's no platform game on any format to rival *Banjo-Kazooie*. It's a huge game, with enormous levels and, like all good Rare games, loads of secrets.

What will I like about it?
The fact that it's eminently approachable, yet challengingly difficult later on. And it looks lovely, it really does. Even if you're not too fond of platform games in general, this is an essential purchase.

What won't I like?
It's hard to say, really. The fact that there's a hidden secret that can't be opened until *Banjo-Tooie* (sic) comes out? It's a good idea, but infuriates the player attempting to attain that coveted 100% complete score...

Bio Freaks

GT ● 76% ● Beat-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

It's a beat-'em-up where both characters can fly. Disregards tight 'game rules' and balance in favour of quick-fix combat and over-the-top gore.

What will I like about it?

You can shoot peoples limbs off, and there's a ridiculous amount of blood-thirsty moves. Anyone can pick it up and play, but it's probably not the sort of thing that'll appeal to most ladies...

What won't I like?

No serious fighting game, this. There are lots of 'cheap' moves that negate attempts to fight 'properly', and the purist will struggle to forgive the inclusion of near-instantaneous ranged attacks.

Blast Corps

N64 Star

Nintendo ● 88% ● Smash-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

It's unique. Controlling a variety of vehicles, you have to clear a path for an approaching missile. As this usually involves smashing all in your path, it's surprisingly enjoyable. Not to mention therapeutic.

What will I like about it?

That it's very much a game for the 'gamer', its arcade-like design satisfies quick-fix mentalities in a manner that so few games do these days. Some of the puzzles are deviously evil, too.

What won't I like?

There aren't enough vehicles, and it's doubtful that the experienced player will take too long to finish it. It's not that it does anything *wrong*, per se, merely that you can always imagine how it could do something else, or something better.

Body Harvest



Gremlin ● 91% ● Shoot-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?
Part shoot-'em-up, part adventure, *Body Harvest* fuses genres to surprisingly playable effect. Packed full of ideas and alien hordes to kill. What more could you ask for?

What will I like about it?
The vehicles, the Nintendo-esque progression whereby areas open up at a carefully balanced rate, and the RPG overtones that provide a small yet significant thoughtful vein throughout.



What won't I like?
The draw distance isn't perfect at times, and it's not really the sort of game the casual player will appreciate.

Bomberman 64

Nintendo ● 50% ● Arcade

Why might I want to buy this?
We're not sure, precisely. The weakest aspect of the *Bomberman* titles has always been the one-player game, with the multiplayer being brilliant. With this, though, Hudson tried to update both. And failed.

What will I like about it?
Again, it's hard to say. The one-player game's still pap, yet Hudson have utterly ruined the multiplayer game. Its foremost virtue was always its simplicity. And it doesn't have that in 3D. We'd have preferred to see a simple, sprite-based reiteration of the SNES version, to be honest...

What won't I like?
Oh my God, they killed Bomberman!

Bomberman Hero

Hudson/Nintendo ● 66% ● Platform game

Why might I want to buy this?
Totally disregarding its multiplayer heritage, *Bomberman Hero* is a 3D adventure.

What will I like about it?
There's a lot wrong with it, that's for sure, but *Bomberman Hero* is – as Tim pointed out in his review – oddly playable.

What won't I like?
No multiplayer game. It made his name, yet he churlishly discards it now he's all 3D, and that. Getting a bit too big for his space boots, this Bomberman fella...

Buck Bumble

Ubi Soft ● 70% ● Shoot-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?
It's a flight-based 3D shoot-'em-up. And you're a bee. With guns.

What will I like about it?
Although 'underwhelming' is a descriptive term we'd favour for describing *Buck Bumble*, it does get better the further you get. Very much a no-brainer, if you can forgive it for its many flaws, it's enjoyable in an unchallenging kind of way. The player-directed guided missile power-up is a great idea, though.

What won't I like?
Its championing of the lives system. That's not actually a problem in itself, but if you die on a level – and, frequently, it's just at the point you're about to complete it – you have to go right back to the start. Frankly, *Buck Bumble* just isn't good enough to demand such patience and forgiveness from players.

Bust-a-Move 2

Acclaim ● 80% ● Puzzle

Why might I want to buy this?
With *Tetris* the obvious exception, *Bust-a-Move* is arguably the greatest, most simplistic and most incredibly playable puzzle game ever created. It's been around for ages, but has finally made its way to the N64 in its '2' guise.

What will I like about it?
It's one of the best two-player games you'll play. And, like many classic games through history, it's hellishly easy to get to grips with, yet appreciably difficult to master. The one-player game's not dreadful – it's the same as its multiplayer equivalent, with uncharismatic CPU-based opponents stepping into the breach – but it's not brilliant, either. One for people with loads of game-playing friends, this.

What won't I like?
The fact that it's a basic, warts-and-all port of the PlayStation version. No new features, nothing. If you have a PC, you can download one of many Public Domain 'tribute' versions for free, yet it's £40 on the N64. Harsh, that. As a cheaper second-hand game, though...

Chameleon Twist

Ocean ● 70% ● Platform game

Why might I want to buy this?
Because it's an odd take on the platform theme. And it has a lightweight, yet oddly playable multiplayer mode.



What will I like about it?
See above.

What won't I like?
See above.

Clayfighter 63 1/3

Interplay ● 24% ● Beat-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

You won't. A pitiful attempt at creating a fighting game, this. Even its name annoys us. Purportedly a parody of the 16-bit era's innumerable weak updates of lame fighting franchises, it seems to miss the point that IT IS JUST THAT. Or perhaps it doesn't. In which case, it's taking the 'pith', and we invite it to step outside for a brutal kicking.

What will I like about it?

Precious little, if indeed anything. Was this a joke, or something?

What won't I like?

Space demands we hold our peace, lest this book end before *Chopper Attack* get a mention. Don't buy it.

Chopper Attack

GT ● 81% ● Shoot-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

It's an honest-to-goodness, no-nonsense shoot-'em-up. It doesn't look great, and is woefully under ambitious, but that's part of its charm.

What will I like about it?

Mindless blasting, the odd set-piece. In moderation, you can't beat a elementary design brief like that. Oh, and the bit where you get a soldier holding on to the back of your chopper is brilliant, as you attempt to swot him on mountains. Nice touch.

What won't I like?

It's very much an old-school game, and lacks depth. Worse, you have to go back to the start of the level when you die. It can take a while to get back to the point where you were, at times – and some people just won't have the patience to do so.

Cruis'n USA

Nintendo ● 24% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?
For a joke. Or, perchance, some twisted masochistic thrill. An abysmal racing game, we wonder how many people were put off the idea of buying an N64 with this as a much-vaunted launch title. Sony must have wet themselves with mirth.

What will I like about it?
That when you crash your car, loads of little mice appear, chanting the mantra: 'We will fix it, we will fix it'. And then this wise owl, right, says... Oh. That was Bagpuss, wasn't it? Right. Nothing, then.

What won't I like?
Everything. Apart from the fact that buildings SUDDENLY APPEAR RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU, which gets quite funny in a 'cabin fever' kind of way. Watch as friends take subtle, alarmed steps away from you as a tangibly maddened edge appears in your chuckles.

Cruis'n World

Nintendo/Midway ● 38% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?
We're not sure. Why did Nintendo bother with a sequel? Why not let sleeping dogs lie? (Or, rather, just forget about the *Cruis'n USA* debacle altogether, and hope that everyone else would, too.)

What will I like about it?
That yes, it's a better game than *Cruis'n USA*. But that's hardly an achievement, is it? It's still a risible racer, and there are far, far better games available.

What won't I like?
Nearly everything.

Dark Rift

Vic Tokai ● 69% ● Beat-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?
It's a beat-'em-up with reasonably attractive visuals.

What will I like about it?
'Like' is probably not the best word in this instance. There's plenty to feel 'ambivalent' about, but 'like'? Not really.

What won't I like?
The fact that its designers merely copied the beat-'em-up blueprint. And they didn't really understand it.

Diddy Kong Racing

Nintendo ● 90% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?
It's the one-player game that *Mario Kart 64* should be, yet – and it's pretty close – isn't. Loads and loads of secrets, plenty of tracks and different vehicle types make this an essential racer for the solitary gamer.



What will I like about it?
It's cheerful, bright and utterly playable. *DKR* is the sort of game that *anyone* can appreciate. The sub-games are a brilliant twist, too.

What won't I like?
That it's not the multiplayer game that *Mario Kart 64* is. Mix the two, and you'd have the perfect cartoon racer. Our advice is to buy both.

Doom 64

GT ● 77% ● First-person blaster

Why might I want to buy this?

The game that kick-started the first-person shoot-'em-up genre, id's classic made a huge contribution to the videogame market. Recognising that many N64 owners might have played it before on another format, developers Midway redesigned its many levels.

What will I like about it?

Once cutting-edge, it's now surprisingly 'retro'. In a totally different league to *GoldenEye*, the *Turok* games and even *Quake 64*, it's still fun to go through a few of its levels at a time. But not excessively so.

What won't I like?

That it's two-dimensional, and shockingly shallow when compared to more recent releases. PC die-hards might also – quite rightly – state that the original levels were more atmospheric, too. It's subjective, but we're almost tempted to side with the keyboard-bashers on this one...

Dual Heroes

Hudson ● 50% ● Beat-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

A beat-'em-up that tries to be different, *Dual Heroes* is 'average' because, despite its many shortcomings, developers Hudson really tried to include some novel features.

What will I like about it?

You can 'train' the CPU to fight in your style. It's not brilliant but it's one of many touches that *might* help players forgive *Heroes* for...

What won't I like?

...its terrible AI. A dismal one-player game, it's sad that there's not enough to encourage you to tackle the two-player option, either.

Duke Nukem 64



GT ● 85% ● First-person blaster

Why might I want to buy this?

The original on the PC saw coders 3D Realms introduce character and a degree of visual 'realism' into the first-person genre. And lo, it was good. This is a commendable update. It may not have the impact it once had but it remains brilliantly playable.

What will I like about it?

The four-player mode is excellent, while the one-player game is no slouch, either. And, like Duke's chauvinistic, stereotyped persona or not, he's one of the better videogame characters, albeit a tad 'watered down' for this N64 release...

What won't I like?

The bitmap assailants appear clumsy, and we would have liked to see more in the way of N64-specific levels. Nintendo's role as censor Is questionable, too – the more puerile references and features of the PC original have been cut, yet the level of violence, if anything, has increased. Brutality yes, sex no? A curious message...

Extreme G



Acclaim ● 87% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?

Prior to the arrival of *F-Zero X* and *Wipeout*, this was the best futuristic racer for the N64. And it's still pretty good, even now.

What will I like about it?

Its speed, and roller-coaster tracks. And it's a tricky game to master, too.

What won't I like?

The fact that *F-Zero X* and *Wipeout* are better games. Still, *Extreme G*'s very affordable as a second-hand game...

F1 Pole Position

Ubi Soft ● 71% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?
With *F1 World Grand Prix* available, it's difficult to recommend this. It's not terribly bad, but its draw distance is awful and the handling of its cars is hardly scientific in its integrity.

What will I like about it?
That it tries – although largely fails – to mix arcade and sim elements to create an enjoyable racing hybrid. Cheap as a second-hand game, too.

What won't I like?
The pop-up, the dodgy draw distance, and the fact that the following game is immeasurably better.

F1 World Grand Prix



Nintendo ● 93% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?
Having waited long and hard for decent N64 racing games, it's bemusing that software stores are now awash with them. *F1 World Grand Prix* is the choice of the genuine driving enthusiast, its strong simulation theme making it a genuine challenge.

What will I like about it?
Almost everything. It gets so many things right. The handling of the cars is superb, the tracks are spot-on and the races appear realistic while obviously allowing greater driving heroics than their real-life equivalents. A superb game.

What won't I like?
It's not the sort of game you can just dip into. It takes time and, yes, even *effort* to hone your skills to an acceptable level. Some people just won't have the patience.

FIFA 64

EA ● 39% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?
This was EA's first feeble attempt to bring their hugely successful FIFA franchise to the N64. Not only does *FIFA 64* lack design characteristics, it's also packed with bugs and gameplay-crippling oversights. We take it as read that the chimps in the testing department were too busy writing Hamlet, or something.

What will I like about it?
If you're British, there's a fair chance you'll relish the opportunity to observe the big 'name' at low ebb. But really, there's nothing good to be said about *FIFA 64*. It's dire.

What won't I like?
That Nintendo and EA could hold their customers in such contempt. For such a high-profile title to be so damn awful beggars belief.

FIFA '98: RTTWC

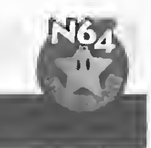
EA ● 83% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?
It's the official World Cup '98 Qualifiers licence. You get to take a team to the World Cup in France. And it's very cheap, these days, with the tournament having come and gone.

What will I like about it?
Some football fans have argued that *The Road To World Cup '98* actually plays a better game of football than its sequel. It's a question of personal taste, of course, but we've no intention of questioning the validity of their point...

What won't I like?
...because we're too busy playing the hugely better *ISS '98* to bother.

Fighters Destiny



Ocean ● 86% ● Beat-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

You might want to play a decent fighting game on the N64. And this is just that.

What will I like about it?

The fact that it roundly 'borrows' from the best fighting games on other formats. But it doesn't just ape their moves and character design – it successfully emulates their all-important 'balance' and playability, too.

What won't I like?

It's just a wee bit short of brilliant. It achieves what it sets out to do – to be a fighting game, and to entertain – but lacks that indefinable, special 'something' that Namco, Capcom and Sega beat-'em-ups tend to have.

Forsaken



Acclaim ● 87% ● Shoot-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

Like a *Doom* or *Quake* in full 360° 3D, *Forsaken* owes plenty to PC game *Descent*. Flying through tunnels, players battle with other flying enemies and fixed turrets.

What will I like about it?

It's large, and certainly difficult. Although it never truly realises its potential – the assailants you face have too little personality, so the various mid-air battles aren't quite as exciting or satisfying as they could be – it does prove to be more enjoyable the further you get into it. And the coloured lighting is fantastic.

What won't I like?

It's not everyone's cup of tea, and the multiplayer game isn't *quite* as good as it could be. A great game, for sure, but one to try first.

F-Zero X



Nintendo ● 91% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?

F-Zero X is a racing game like no other. There may be similarities between this and *Wipeout* or *Extreme G*, but Nintendo's game offers an entirely different driving experience. After you've beaten its four skill settings, there are an infinite number of tracks to race on, too, thanks to it X-Cup course generator.

What will I like about it?

Precious few N64 games have realised the potential of analogue control in the way that *F-Zero X* does. The most minute adjustments are called for, making it almost sim-like in its intensity at times. It's fast. It's difficult – quite possibly the trickiest game on the N64 to beat, in many ways – and it's utterly classic. You need to own this game.

What won't I like?

Beautiful, it is not. Functional, yes. And hard? Oh, how.

GASP!!

Konami ● 47% ● Beat-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

We can't, for the life of us, think why. Bland, flawed and woefully underwhelming.

What will I like about it?

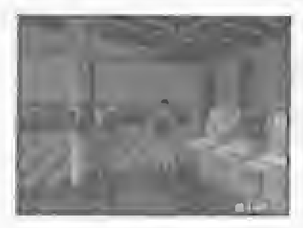
You get to punch characters. They fight back. It got that right, at least...

What won't I like?

We'd have loved to put something funny here, but the N64 Directory gets it so right, we're going to re-print what it says there: 'A stinky old fighter, sneaked out without anyone noticing. Or so Konami thought. We sprang out on it and punched it in the face.' Quite.

GoldenEye 007

Nintendo ● 94% ● First-person blaster



Why might I want to buy this?

Because it's one of the best games ever created. Prior to its release, the first-person shoot-'em-up was almost the sole preserve of the PC owner. You could get such games for consoles – mostly conversions of PC originals, funnily enough – but the impetus behind their design was invariably that of who could create the best graphics engine, or network-based multiplayer game. *GoldenEye* changed all that, doing a great deal to reverse the trend.

What will I like about it?

Everything. From its innovative sniper's rifle, to its superb targeting system and incredible level design, *GoldenEye* is astonishingly good. To add to its appeal, Rare added two extra skill settings. But, rather than doing what other developers do, and simply hiking up the number of guards and the accuracy of their return fire, they also added new objectives. Thus, you can play through the entire game at Agent level, and have only completed a fraction of the total objectives. Secret Agent level is maddeningly difficult, and 007 Agent near impossible, yet completing both gives two totally new levels. There are many other secrets, too – in true Rare tradition – and the multiplayer game is exceptional, despite the curious omission of dedicated Deathmatch levels. Truly, this is gaming perfection.



What won't I like?

The wait until next year for its 'sequel', *Perfect Dark*. You *must* own this game, and most likely already do. Which is good.

GT 64

Ocean ● 67% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?
Appearing for the N64 shortly after *Gran Turismo* was released on the PlayStation, *GT 64*'s cunning moniker belied its unrefined nature. Some liked its handling, and its over-reliance on power slides. Others hated it.

What will I like about it?
It's a fairly down-to-earth arcade racer with a few fancy ideas. As such, it's jack of both racing trades – sim and, um, not sim – yet master of neither.

What won't I like?
It looks horrible. Nasty pop-up, fuzz by the Mohair jumper-load and a general all-round tatty countenance. It's not particularly fast, either. And if you don't like its handling method...

Hexen

Midway ● 69% ● First-person blaster

Why might I want to buy this?
Another PC conversion, *Hexen* originally used a tweaked version of *Doom*'s graphics engine. On the N64, the only evidence of this is that you can look up and down.

What will I like about it?
It uses a 'hub' map system making for much exploration and experimental backtracking if you like the concept, or mindless legwork if you don't. As an N64 game, it looks unconditionally tatty but it's not terrible. Just very old.

What won't I like?
That this venerable yet doddering old dinosaur of a game does, indeed, smell faintly of cabbage.

Iggy's Reckin' Balls

Acclaim ● 56% ● Puzzle

Why might I want to buy this?
It's by Iguana. And they did *Turok*, so this must be good, right?

What will I like about it?
It's by Iguana. And they did *Turok*, so this must be good, right?

What won't I like?
Oh. It's not. (And why? Because the console AI's pap, and Iguana's attempt to create a simple, easy-to-play puzzle game is a failure. And it's *boring*. This is why *Tetris* and *Bust-a-Move* are in a tiny minority – it's damn difficult to create a good puzzler. And if the talented Iguana team got it so desperately wrong, that says something. Right?)

ISS64

Konami ● 92% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?
It *was* the best football game for any format in the entire history of life itself. Alas, no more. *ISS '98* has stolen its mantle, a seasonal update that *genuinely* offers more than its predecessor (*FIFA*, take note).

What will I like about it?
Lots and lots of things. It's a fantastic football game, simulating the real-life sport while retaining an all-important degree of arcade integrity. But, and this is a *big* but...

What won't I like?
...*ISS '98* is, without question, the better game. Mind you, if you have no appreciation of football as a game, or have a severe cash-flow problem, you could pick up *ISS64* for twenty quid or even a few pounds under that, if you shop carefully.

ISS '98



Konami ● 92% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?

It's the best football game on any format.

What will I like about it?



Like its predecessor, *ISS '98* balances its tribute to 'real' footballing tactics with the need for fluent, arcade-oriented play. But, more than that, the way you approach a game genuinely effects the results. You can have one player who can tackle, yet isn't so good in the goal area, and another who's the opposite, and the battle of wills that ensues can be remarkable. It's incredible as a two-player game, but – get this – is almost equally good as a solitary pursuit. With this update, Konami addressed the problems with free kicks (they were weak before) and other minor problems. As this is now as near to footballing perfection as we can imagine, what on earth will they include next year? We wait with bated breath...

What won't I like?

Having bought any version of *FIFA* first, if you did. Foolish pup.





Killer Instinct Gold

Nintendo ● 62% ● Fighting

Why might I want to buy this?
Technically, as it has the Rare logo on the box, you should have every reason to do so. But wait. And listen.

What will I like about it?
It's an old-school fighting game that looks increasingly dated. Pre-rendered CGI fighters, moves and play balance that fall somewhere between the style of *Mortal Kombat* and *Street Fighter* (but aren't as good as either)... you know the type. Technically, there's little wrong with it, beside its pronounced lack of ambition.

What won't I like?
It's not very good, to be honest. Not awful, just... average. Clinically so.

Kobe Bryant in NBA Courtside

Nintendo ● 90% ● Sports sim



Why might I want to buy this?
It's the best basketball game on the N64.

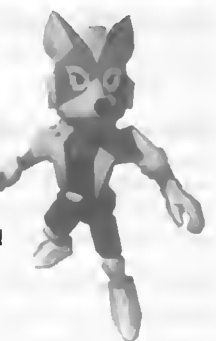
What will I like about it?
Its remarkable aesthetics are worthy of note, and its well-judged control system can't be disregarded, but it boils down to this: do you like basketball? If so, it's a must-buy. If not, it's a great team-based arcade game that's more than worth a quick gander.

What won't I like?
At the end of the day it's a basketball game. And basketball's not great is it?

Lylat Wars



Nintendo ● 91% ● Shoot-'em-up



Why might I want to buy this?
It's a game by Shigeru Miyamoto and friends.

What will I like about it?
A triumph of shoot-'em-up action and simplified flight mechanics, *Lylat Wars* is a lot bigger that its SNES counterpart. And that's good. Looking after your wingmen, fighting enormous end-of-level bosses – it has the lot. And it looks and sounds great, as you'd expect from a Nintendo-produced game...

What won't I like?
The ground-based vehicle is a bit weak. You'll enjoy completing a section with it, if only to get back into the cockpit for more 'proper' *Lylat Wars* play. It's strange, but we'd also say that it's not *quite* as good as we expected. We can't specify *why* exactly. It just isn't.

Mace: The Dark Age

GT ● 81% ● Beat-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?
It's another N64 fighting game that, while enjoyable, fails to challenge the dizzier heights of the **N64** Magazine ratings system.

What will I like about it?
That it's competent, on the odd occasion spectacular, and fairly easy to get to grips with.

What won't I like?
That it's an uncommonly 81%-type fighting game. Enjoyable, yet so rarely brilliant.

Madden 64



EA ● 92% ● Sports sim

Why might I want to buy this?
The *Madden* games are consistently good, on every format. *Madden 64* is no exception.

What will I like about it?
It may not have the fan-pleasing licence of *NFL Quarterback Club '98*, but *Madden*'s the better game. The difference between the two isn't huge but the slightly more watered-down design of EA's game will have more resonance with UK gamers unfamiliar with the sport.

What won't I like?
It's an American football game. And, with a sequel on the immediate horizon at the time of writing, we'd advise the purist to look at that.

Mario Kart 64



Nintendo ● 91% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?
For its multiplayer game. The solitary game isn't terrible – although certainly overshadowed by that of *Diddy Kong Racing* – but it's with a group of friends that *Mario Kart* shines.

What will I like about it?
That it's so easy to play, and packed full of the wee intrigues and idiosyncrasies that make Nintendo's 'own brand' software the best in the world. The tracks are great – if a far cry from the tight (and tiny) flat tracks of the SNES original. It's a must-buy, pure and simple.

What won't I like?
Again, like *Lylat Wars*, we felt just a tad disappointed by *Mario Kart 64*, feeling that it didn't quite make the impression that its predecessor did. It's close, though.

Mischief Makers



Nintendo ● 90% ● Shoot-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

Treasure – *Mischief's* coders – have a good and justly-accorded reputation. They're renowned for creating esoteric, and oh-so-eccentric arcade games with strong shoot-'em-up overtones – and guess what?

What will I like about it?

It's refreshingly off-beat, and unusual. You'll find yourself consistently surprised by it, despite its decidedly 'retro' nature.

What won't I like?

Well, if you *really* don't like 2D games, then we're hardly going to convince you of its merits, are we?

Mission: Impossible

Infogrames ● 75% ● Adventure

Why might I want to buy this?

Originally due for release in the N64's first year, *Mission: Impossible* suffered from just a *little* slippage. With *GoldenEye* setting new standards for movie tie-ins during its protracted development period, Infogrames had a hard task ahead of them. They had a good go at offering something different, and enjoyed a certain degree of success...

What will I like about it?

It's not a shoot-'em-up, but more of a linear adventure. There are puzzles to solve and, although the more action-based sections require you forgive decidedly questionable AI, they *can* be quite satisfying.

What won't I like?

The dodgy AI, the controls, the graphics and its unhelpful or even unfair manner. Another year in development, and they might have got it right...

MK Mythologies

GT ● 9% ● Execrable mess

Why might I want to buy this?
No-one, in their right minds, would care to partake in a transaction that involved the exchange of denominations of a fiscal nature for this, this... well, words fail us. Possibly the worst game ever released for the N64.

What will I like about it?
Nothing. Playing it is like being whipped to death with urine-soaked laces. If we were to write a feature on its time in development, we'd call it 'Origin of the Faeces'. No, really.

What won't I like?
In a very real sense, every aspect of it.

Mortal Kombat 4

GT ● 84% ● Beat-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?
The fourth in the venerable (and oft-pants) *Mortal Kombat* series, *MK4* sees Midway go 'back to basics'. So, while it's undoubtedly a better looking game, and features more characters and moves, the actual flow of its gameplay pays homage to the first *MK* game.

What will I like about it?
It's simple to play. The fatalities are as ridiculous as ever, although they're much more creative and visceral now Midway have discarded the digitised bitmaps of old. It's fun. Nothing astonishing. Just fun.

What won't I like?
It's hardly the most progressive game ever, is it? And, to be honest, the combos and chain moves of the *MK* games have always been weak. That's not necessarily a criticism, more an observation of its limitations. And that.

Mortal Kombat Trilogy

GT ● 34% ● Beat-'em-up



Why might I want to buy this?

If you absolutely, completely and totally, unreservedly MUST own an old-style *Mortal Kombat* game for the N64, then this is your only chance. And it's awful, it really is – although long-standing fans of the series may be a mite more forgiving than we are.

What will I like about it?

There are many, many characters, and plenty of secrets. Options? It has them. And, erm...

What won't I like?

The fact that passing Mega Drive owners will chuckle as you play.

Multi-Racing Championship

Ocean ● 71% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?

It's from the same people that did *Top Gear Rally*. And that was, you'll recall, rather good.



What will I like about it?

It's not an entirely bad little racer...

What won't I like?

...but it looks awful, and it's far too easy.

Mystical Ninja starring Goemon

Konami ● 90% ● Platform Adventure



Why might I want to buy this?
It's an off-beat platform adventure. It's not up to the standard of *Mario* or *B-K*, but more than deserves its bronze medal and slightly lower spot on the podium.

What will I like about it?
Although lacking the level of brazen eccentricity that typifies some of Goemon's previous outings – weird lad, him – *Mystical Ninja* is a game to get your teeth into. Plenty to do, plenty to see.

What won't I like?
That it alludes to more in-depth play – possibly even RPG-style play – but never really delivers. That's not a problem as such, but we thought we'd give it a mention.

Nagano Winter Olympics

Konami ● 32% ● Sports 'sim'

Why might I want to buy this?
Remember Track and Field, and its button-bashing ilk? *Nagano* is of the same lineage.

What will I like about it?
It requires a bit more skill from players than simple pad battering. But only just. Some people loved the Curling game, yet hated the rest. 40's a bit steep for a basic sim of a 'bowls on ice'-type sport, though...

What won't I like?
It's tedious. Its soporific effects are unquestionable, though. Insomniacs, take note.

NBA Hangtime

GT ● 52% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?

Remember *NBA Jam*? Well, here we go again. Two-on-two basketball.

What will I like about it?



Again, like *NBA Jam* it has a huge number of cheats to discover and use.

What won't I like?

It doesn't arouse much interest. Two-on-two basketball could, we're sure, work if done properly. But this doesn't.

NBA Pro '98

Konami ● 71% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?

It's a fully fledged basketball sim, so if you like this sort of thing, it delivers the basic goods. But it's not the greatest game of its type.

What will I like about it?

There's plenty that's good about it, including reams of stats for the fan of the performance-based figure. It's not a brilliant basketball game, but it's more than above average.



What won't I like?

One simple fact: Nintendo's *Kobe Bryant* is a lot better.

NFL Blitz



GT ● 87% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?
It's an arcade-oriented representation of American football.

What will I like about it?
Well, it's certainly easier to get to grips with than *Madden* or *Quarterback Club*. The option to create your own custom plays is unique, too – even if, for most players, they'll get no more complex than a Somme-style 'Charge!' formation.

What won't I like?
It's American football, isn't it? Arcade-based or not, if you really don't like it...

NFL Quarterback Club '98

Acclaim ● 86% ● Sports sim



Why might I want to buy this?
It's second only to *Madden*, but adopts a slightly more 'hardcore' approach. One for fans, then.

What will I like about it?
Its visuals. Wonderfully hi-res, it's the rival of any similar game, on any machine. Having the official licence, it's bound to appeal more to followers of the sport.



What won't I like?
Madden just edges it, being that little bit better. And, again, it's American football, so...

NHL Breakaway

Acclaim ● 62% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?

It's a hockey game. Although it's not a mainstream sport in this country, games based on it tend to be more approachable than their American football or baseball equivalents. *NHL Breakaway*, however, is not the best rendition on the N64 – that honour, we feel, still lies with the Wayne Gretzky-endorsed effort.

What will I like about it?

It provides all the basics you'd expect. Some would argue that young Dean Mortlock under-rated it, but it's certainly not an 80%er.

What won't I like?

Your landlady hanging around like a bad smell, hand outstretched for rent when you're trying to think of something bad to write about it.

NHL '99

EA ● 74% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?

Well, it's a famous brand name, renowned for many, many good releases. *NHL '99* is its N64 debut and, while hardly perfect, it's certainly not too bad.

What will I like about it?

The sheer amount of options and play modes. Incredible attention to detail and it's good for multiplayer games, too.

What won't I like?

The AI of your CPU-controlled opponents is suspect. And your team-mates aren't brilliant, either. The inertia – such an important aspect of previous NHL games – doesn't really survive the transition to analogue control, either. Hopefully, next year's release will address both flaws.

Olympic Hockey Nagano '98

GT ● 60% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?

Hard to say, really. With three games comfortably above it in the hockey pecking order, it's a purchase for the ice-based sport obsessive alone.

What will I like about it?

Well, it has the official Nagano licence, so the player rosters are current as of then. And it doesn't play a bad game. Not a *great* game, mind...

What won't I like?

'Cheap, cynical cash-in', and all that. Not over here, though. It hardly sold at all. Arf!

Pilotwings 64

Nintendo ● 89% ● Flight sim



Why might I want to buy this?

An original, almost 'dreamy' game, the therapeutic benefits of which should be investigated. Unless, of course, you're at a difficult bit. Because then it's a git.

What will I like about it?

Taking control of the different fliers and performing the required tasks is challenging and enjoyable. *Pilotwings* is a game almost tailor-made for the N64's analogue stick, and discovering all of its secrets will take an age. A solid investment.



What won't I like?

It's a mite too slow for some. It's the sort of game for the patient, thoughtful gamer, who appreciates 'little things' and the subtle reward of a job well done.



Quake 64

GT ● 79% ● First-person blaster

Why might I want to buy this?
It wasn't so long ago that this was the Best Thing Ever on the PC. And now? Well, there's *Quake 2, Half Life* and *Unreal*. On the N64, there's *GoldenEye*, the forthcoming *Quake 2* conversion and *Perfect Dark*. Once big, hard and brash in the technology stakes, it's now a meek little kitten. But, despite its reduced circumstances, it still has claws...

What will I like about it?
It plays totally differently to any other first-person shoot-'em-up on the N64. It doesn't look great, but it's fun to play, a few levels at a time.

What won't I like?
The one-player game is a direct port of the PC version, but the multiplayer mode, alas, has not survived the transition. The best part of the PC original has been trimmed to a mere two-player blast on N64, which speaks volumes about the low power of its engine.

Rakuga Kids

Konami ● 80% ● Beat-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?
It's a cartoony, oddball beat-'em-up. And it's very cute.

What will I like about it?
Beat-'em-up aficionados will immediately recognise its Capcom-like move system and distinct *Street Fighter* overtones. It may look nothing like it, and the on-screen representation of the attacks may be wildly different, but replace *Rakuga Kids'* weird characters with Ryu, et al...

What won't I like?
Read the above, with a slightly different emphasis. It's not everyone's cup of tea, and the unusual visual style may put off a number of purists.

Rampage World Tour

GT ● 54% ● Smash-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

Because it's an update of *Rampage*, a game long-standing gamers will fondly recall from the smoky arcades of their youth.

What will I like about it?

That Lizzie, Ralph and George reprise their roles, and smash everything. Wanton destruction, eh? Nicer than a badger's smile...

What won't I like?

Well, it's all a bit dated, really. And it's shockingly lightweight for a 40 cartridge...

Robotron 64

GT ● 75% ● Shoot-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

Again, it's an update of a classic arcade machine. A fast, no-nonsense blaster, with coherent thought during play being a distinct disadvantage...

What will I like about it?



That it's unpretentiously simple to play, yet almost unforgivably hard to master. It's played for points, too, which will doubtlessly appeal to the lover of all things retro.

What won't I like?

It's very repetitive – its basic design brief allows little variation on its simple theme. It's certainly an enthusiast's game...

San Francisco Rush

GT ● 82% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?

It's a distinctly arcade-oriented racer, with its emphasis on leaps, mad crashes and secret areas. No simulation, this...



What will I like about it?

The pile-ups are great, and there's lots to find and do.

What won't I like?

If you're a stickler for realism, avoid.

Shadows of the Empire

Nintendo ● 78% ● Shoot-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

It comprises shoot-'em-up, first-person blasting and simplified flight-based blasting. And it's a Star Wars game, which counts for something.

What will I like about it?

The Hoth level is great – downing an AT-AT with a tow cable is remarkably good fun. And it's genuinely a jack of all trades, this...

What won't I like?

...but a master of none. The first-person shoot-'em-up sections, in particular, are weak. Shame.

Silicon Valley



Take 2 ● 91% ● Platform variant

Why might I want to buy this?

As Martin so sagely mentions in N64/22's review, it's breathtakingly original. It's cute, engaging, and has more ideas than a very, very clever professor. Who invents lots of very, very clever things. Ahem.

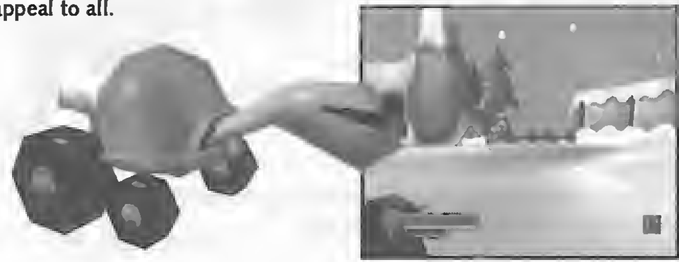


What will I like about it?

The cute characters – bless the little penguins. And we love you too – and the effortless fusion of puzzle solving and arcade skills.

What won't I like?

It looks very 'first generation' – ie, old. Similarly, its off-beat nature won't appeal to all.



Snowboard Kids







Why might I want to buy this?
It's a simplistic, refreshing racing game that owes more to *Mario Kart* than, as you might think, the immeasurably more 'serious' *1080°*. And it's genuinely fun.

What will I like about it?
The courses, power-ups and secrets. The multiplayer mode's not to be sniffed at, either.

What won't I like?
It's not the most technically accomplished N64 game we've ever seen. Often workmanlike in appearance, the collision detection can be a bit suspect at times, too.

Starshot Space Circus Fever

Infogrames ● 68% ● Platform

Why might I want to buy this?
Because it's a huge platform game that, with *Mario* and *Banjo* completed, offers a genuine challenge.

What will I like about it?
The sheer size of the game, and each level's unique, varied appearance – scruffy or not, there are a lot of new textures wobbling around. And that's nice.

What won't I like?
Maddeningly hard in places, and a mite tatty to behold. And Starshot has a tiny shadow, so you often can't see where you're going to land. Important, that.

Super Mario 64



Nintendo ● 96% ● Platform



Why might I want to buy this?

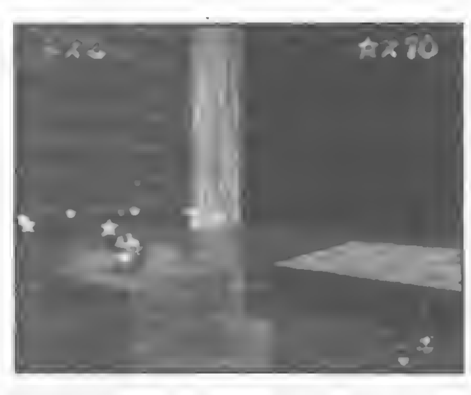
Why don't you already own it? The greatest platform game ever created, bar none.

What will I like about it?

It's difficult to know where to start. Despite the many months past since its breathlessly-awaited release, it's still one of the most, if not *the* most indispensable N64 game money can buy.

What won't I like?

Criticising *Mario 64* for its minor flaws is like having an arse-kicking contest with a 10-foot-high porcupine. When you realise the feeble nature of your points – and oh, how you will, you fool – you'll feel a right... well. You know.



Tetrisphere

Nintendo ● 69% ● Puzzle



Why might I want to buy this?

The puzzle game is an unfashionable genre at present, and there are all-too-few games of this ilk around...

What will I like about it?

Well, it does *try* to offer a 3D 'take' on the popular *Tetris* theme...

What won't I like?

...but only succeeds in adding crippling complexity to a concept that relies on its simplicity to appeal. We'd prefer a basic port of *Tetris*, to be honest...

Top Gear Rally

Nintendo ● 86% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?

Despite its age, *Top Gear Rally* does retain a great deal of its initial appeal. Overshadowed by recent releases like *V-Rally 99* and *F1 World Grand Prix*, it's nonetheless a detailed racing game. Very cheap at second-hand prices, too.



What will I like about it?

Great track design, and impressive speed.

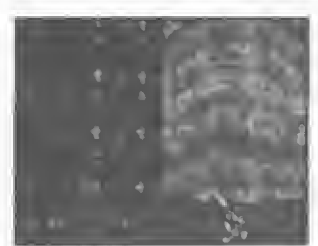
What won't I like?

Beginning to show its age. But, again, as a cheap second-hand purchase...

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter



Acclaim ● 91% ● First-person blaster



Why might I want to buy this?

Because it's a genuinely enjoyable game, with few real flaws. And, with its big brother out on the streets, it's more affordable than ever as a second hand purchase.

What will I like about it?

The dinosaurs, and frankly ludicrous offensive arsenal that Turok can call upon. Nuclear weapons indeed...

What won't I like?

The exactitude required to negotiate certain platform sections, and the relatively low draw distance. And *GoldenEye* came out and was so much better, after Iguana put all that effort in...





Turok 2: Seeds of Evil



Acclaim ● 95% ● First-person blaster



Why might I want to buy this?

It's, quite frankly, the sequel that everyone would have asked for. Bigger, better, and visually rather lovely in Expansion pak-enabled high-res mode, direct comparisons with *GoldenEye* would be foolish. They're both essential games.

What will I like about it?

Like its predecessors, the weapons and monsters are great, but the AI and level design's much, much better in *Seeds of Evil*. And the Cerebral Bore weapon engenders sick fascination of a kind we've rarely encountered before – yes, even Martin. Oh, how we squealed with distaste and delight...



What won't I like?

Demonstrating the Cerebral Bore gun for the fortieth time to yet another wide-eyed mate. And the fact that, thanks to its 'evocative' sound effect, you'll never use a Black and Decker or visit a dentist again...

V-Rally 99



Infogrames ● 90% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?

It (finally!) succeeds where so many others have failed: it provides a genuinely enjoyable and technically sound arcade-style racer for N64 owners. And that's good, that.

What will I like about it?

The sheer number of tracks, its appreciably difficult learning curve, and its speed. And if it's a challenge you're after, *V-Rally*'s not to be found wanting...

What won't I like?

It's very, very unforgiving. The slightest misdirection of the control stick can lose you the race. Even Tim blanched at some of James's language while he was playing it for the review.

Wave Race 64



Nintendo ● 90% ● Racing

Why might I want to buy this?

It's a racing game on a par with (although, obviously, a little different to) the likes of *Mario Kart* and *Diddy Kong Racing*.

What will I like about it?

Its brilliant water effects, superb two-player mode and difficult yet satisfying stunts.

What won't I like?

Harking from the 'Europe? Third world, that. Let them view borders' era, widescreen-like 'black panels' adorn top and bottom of the display. Create your own apt HUD-style graffiti with Tipp-Ex in this 'thoughtfully' provided space. "Whoever approved this PAL translation is a muppet" is our favourite.

Waialae Country Club Golf

Nintendo ● 49% ● Sport sim



Why might I want to buy this?

You won't, unless you're gasping for a golf game. And if that's the case, you deserve all you get.

What will I like about it?

That a purchase does not entail death from a horrible disease. But it's not *that* terrible, really. Just bad.

What won't I like?

That there's no PC version, so you can't say 'I rented versions for both and got a hole in one!' Arf. And the fact that its ball mechanics are pap, its visuals sub-PlayStation, its control method abysmally unambitious...

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey

GT ● 75% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?

It's a fast-paced 'arcade' rendition of hockey. As so few people have a genuine appreciation for the 'true' sport over here, it makes it that mite more approachable.



What will I like about it?

Its speed, multiplayer mode, and the fact that it's the *NBA Jam* of hockey games. Remarkably uncomplicated, and oh-so-approachable.

What won't I like?

If it's a proper 'sim' of the sport that you're after, stick with *NHL '99*.

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey '98

GT ● 70% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?
For the same reasons you might consider purchasing its predecessor. It doesn't offer much more than that, so...

What will I like about it?
Again: speed, multiplayer, uncomplicated, approachable.

What won't I like?
That it's not *really* the comprehensive update you'd expect for £40. At second hand prices, and taking it as read that you own neither, we'd recommend this one. But it doesn't make too much difference, no matter which one you choose...

WCW vs NWO World Tour

T•HQ ● 70% ● Beat-'em-up



Why might I want to buy this?
Lots of moves, lots of wrestlers, mucho posturing. Swinging people around by their spangly pants, and all that.

What will I like about it?
That it's relatively easy to get to grips with, and doesn't look overly shoddy. The lines between wrestling games and 'traditional' beat-'em-ups is becoming increasingly blurred, though, so the obvious comparisons that fact entails lead to harsh truths.

What won't I like?
If you're genuinely a keen student of the proper 'sport', you might be a bit perturbed that bouts aren't fixed. You actually have to win them fair and square. No 'sim' this, then...

Wetrix

Ocean ● 74% ● Puzzle

Why might I want to buy this?
Bust-a-Move 2 aside, it's the best puzzle game on the N64.

What will I like about it?
The points-based objectives, the latent simplicity, the refreshingly honest yet spiteful play its two-player mode engenders.

What won't I like?
Gets repetitive in a manner that *Tetris* never did. And, for a points-based game in the late nineties, its simple high score table is shockingly uninventive. Where are all the lovely stats and secrets? A little more imagination could have made this a real stunner...

World Cup '98

EA ● 73% ● Sport sim

Why might I want to buy this?
It's the official World Cup '98 game, so you get to play as the 'real' players, and not as Alan She-Ra, or the like. And if you're desperate for more soccer after *ISS*, it's not a *terrible* alternative...

What will I like about it?
The stats are nice for the genuine football fan – as, obviously, are the names – and it doesn't make a total mess of simulating its real-life subject matter.

What won't I like?
That either *ISS* game could nutmeg it with both legs broken. And all their toes cut off. And iron pins drilled through their knees. Because it really isn't brilliant, despite its high profile – its marketing-based posturing and bluster concentrated on niceties such as incidental player animations and other gimmicky features. Not arse, but nearly.

WWF Warzone



Acclaim ● 85% ● Beat-'em-up

Why might I want to buy this?

It's the best wrestling game for the N64. Enthusiasts will love the moves and references to the real-life 'sport', while the casual player will appreciate its merit as a fighting game.

What will I like about it?

That it's an enjoyable brawl, and that the WWF licence can mean nowt if you're just after stylised fisticuffs. You can create your own character, too – although, with this being the age of the digital pet, we're amazed there's no Pokemon-style rearing and rucking. An odd oversight, that...

What won't I like?

Hard to say, as it does pretty much everything well. Its limitations are that of its subject matter, in many ways.

Yoshi's Story



Nintendo ● 86% ● Platform

Why might I want to buy this?

It's a Nintendo game forsaking the 3D of most modern platformers for classic 2D action. That, as any gamer worth their salt will attest, is no bad thing.

What will I like about it?

Its beautiful, stylised locales, the pleasing duality of its gameplay – play it properly for 'correct' fruit, or simply to clear each level – and the utterly amazing soundtrack. The singing Yoshis are soooooo endearing.

What won't I like?

It's rather too easy to complete and, surprisingly, not overly inventive. We expect more from Nintendo, but it says something that one of their least impressive in-house efforts can still elicit review pointage of 86%...

Chapter two

The complete guide to import buying

What is an import game?

Buying second hand games

Who do I call?

GUIDE TO IMPORT BUYING

There's a world outside your window. And, believe it or not, it continues to slope steadily round, past Electronics Boutique, beyond Game, up the road to HMV and onwards. Eventually – depending on which road you've taken – you'll either arrive in Japan, or America. When you get there, you'll note both countries have a rich variety of games that we poor Europeans don't have. Munching on your McDonalds – a global constant, lamentably – you'll find shops packed with N64 games you've never even *heard* of.

It's quite a walk for a shopping trip, though.

The better, shoe-saving alternative is to find yourself a store that sells 'import' games. That's the first move. But there's far more to buying software from another region than you'd think, which is why we've compiled this brief, yet all-encompassing guide. From the fat delights of *64 O-Sumo* to the eccentric *Denryu Ira Ira Bou*, you'll be able to buy those obscure titles that you've read so much about, but couldn't find at your local emporium. What's more, you'll be able to pick up certain titles *before* they arrive in UK stores, if you're that way inclined.

Interested? Read on...

What is an import game?

Ah. A newcomer to the N64 world, yes? An 'import' game is a title that, as its name suggests, harks from an entirely different locale. So: not Birmingham. And not Barmouth, or even Torquay, as glamourous and tantalisingly distant as it may seem. Think Japan. Think USA. Think 'far away'.

Merely being created is not enough to guarantee an N64 game a European release. Nintendo Europe are picky about the types of games they wish to release over here. Some games, you see, are intrinsically 'Japanese', and are judged to be a mite to strange for our more reserved tastes (eg: *Cruis'n USA* was just crap – not 'odd' – so that was okay. No, it does make sense. Hang on, though...). So, if you're wanting to acquire certain titles, an 'import' version is your only hope. You'll find we cover pretty much every one released each month.

Of course, there are times when a game definitely *will* be released over here, but not for a while. This is, in essence, the impetus behind the majority of import sales. Consider, for example, the wait for *1080° Snowboarding*. Aghast at the possibility of months of tortured pacing and nail-biting, certain N64 owners simply bought Jap, American or even Australian PAL-specific versions.

What's PAL?

And why is it 'specific'? I'm frightened...

Don't be. PAL is the television 'standard' used by the majority of Europe and Australia. Any PAL game will work on your UK N64. They're the carts you can buy in any games store over the UK. However, most import games hail from Japan or America, where the NTSC television standard is used...

NTSC?

This sounds complicated...

It's not. We promise. But it is an important point. You see, NTSC carts simply won't work with PAL machines. If you were to, say, go out and buy a Jap version of *Zelda*, or *Tamagotchi World 64*, they wouldn't work on your UK machine. It's as simple as that.

But why?

In truth, it's not the differences between the NTSC and PAL TV systems that prevent UK gamers from using Jap and American carts on their machines – that's a bit of a gross simplification. Instead, it's a nasty little trick inherent to every box known as 'Territorial Lockout'. It lives up to its name. Thus, NTSC games won't work on PAL machines, and vice-versa.

So how do I get NTSC games to work?

There are two answers to this. And they are:

1: Buy a 'converter' device.

There are two on the market in the UK, manufactured by Blaze Electronics and EMS respectively. They're simple to use. You put a UK PAL game in a slot at the back of the unit, the NTSC game you wish to play in the top. Then you simply slot the unit into your N64. And that's it. In *theory*, at least.

In practice, it's a little more complicated. Nintendo periodically change the 'Territorial Lockout' code, meaning that while one generation of Japanese or American games will work, another will not. This is why the 'converter' add-ons are updated at certain intervals. EMS's Passport did, until recently, support around 99% of all released games. However, this number is reduced with their current version which, according to a couple of sources, only works with around 60% of NTSC games. Blaze's cart and Vision's Rainbow, are also a mite hit and miss.

If you're going to buy a converter cart, it's worth checking before you buy each import game. If you pick a large, scrupulous and, above all, *knowledgeable* importer, they'll be able to tell you categorically if each title will work or not. It's hardly a precise art, but buying a converter cart is generally the cheapest way to play NTSC titles.

2: Buy an American or Japanese N64

If you're seriously into the idea of buying Jap or American games, it's probably worth your while to simply buy an NTSC machine. Mail order firm Department 1 (0171 916 8440) sell basic US N64s for £78 – a perfectly reasonable price – and RGB converted machines for £98. This is, of course, the purists choice. Although Nintendo of Europe now try to enhance PAL games by 'stretching' the display to eliminate borders, and optimising certain code to get an extra bit of speed, it's sad but true that NTSC games tend to be that little bit faster. Sometimes – like with *Wave Race 64* – the difference is a tangible indictment of the PAL release...

Okay. I'm off to buy an NTSC machine...

Hang on. Wait. There's more. What kind of TV do you own? This bit can be tricky, so pay attention. Sadly, NTSC signals just won't work with a number of UK TVs. Instead of the glorious, border-free N64 gaming heaven you'd anticipate, running an NTSC game on a television unequipped to deal with the signal could result in no picture appearing at all. At best, you'll get a horrible, black-and-white, line-ridden 'stretched' display. In short, it's going to be unplayable.

Your TV will fit into one of three categories. It'll either be a relatively new (and probably expensive) machine capable of accepting both NTSC and PAL signals, a PAL model with SCART socket that runs at 60MHz and *doesn't* accept NTSC, or a very basic 50MHz PAL with, again, no NTSC support. If you want to find out which one yours is,

take a look at the manual. If you've lost it, give the manufacturers a ring. They'll give you the information you need, if you're polite, or you could try the store you bought it from.

Know which one you own, now? If you own a basic 50MHz PAL, then things could get very expensive. Essentially, you're going to have to buy a new TV if you want to play import games. If, however, your TV is a PAL machine running at 60MHz, you've no need to worry. If you buy an N64 with RGB conversion – Department 1, again, do one for just shy of £100 – you'll be able to play Jap and American games. If, finally, you're the proud owner of a machine that displays PAL and NTSC signals as a matter of course, you can opt for a basic US model. You lucky soul.

So I'm ready to play import games now, then?

Yep. But you should bear in mind that certain Japanese games are difficult to get to grips with, due to the lack of English instructions. Only experienced gamers should consider buying a title with lots of Jap text that heavily influences play.

For example, someone who has already played different versions of *Sim City 2000* on another format will have a good idea of what to do with the N64 equivalent. The newcomer, however, will struggle. If you have Net access, it's worth noting that – on occasion – certain Web sites will print guides to Jap games, with menu text, plot or even dialogue translation. You can't rely on this, though, as it tends to appear a while after a game's original release. In general, if you're not sure that you'll be able to get to grips with a game, it's best not to bother. Check the 'Accessibility' box in **N64**'s import reviews for advice.

That it? Great! What would you recommend?

Well, there are always games that appear in Japan or the US a couple of months before their Euro release. They're always worth a glance, especially if they're by Nintendo. Well, *obviously*. It's also worthy of note that a number of 'older' titles are, if you shop carefully, cheaper as US imports and occasionally *much* cheaper as Japanese. We've discovered second-hand bargains like a Japanese *Yoshi's Story* for £15, US *Quake* for £18, Japanese *Starfox 64* for £10 without Rumble pak or £20 with it... the list could go on. Pretty cheap, yes? And running at 60MHz, too...

Who do I call?

Some numbers for companies that supply import games. Be sure to ask questions, and shop around for the best deal.

Department 1	0171 916 8440 (Mail order)
	0171 636 2666 (General Enquiries)
Akihabara Games Central	01207 582 345
CA Games	0141 334 3901
Advance Console Entertainment	
	0171 439 1185
Skill	0181 567 9174
Fantasy World	01782 279294
Nextgen	0181 3390 666

Can you give me a list of prices to give me a general idea of what to expect?

Yep. No problem. This price listing is from Department 1, and will probably be hopelessly out of date by the time you read it, but it gives a basic idea of how much import games can cost. Indeed, if you're missing a number of 'essential' classics from your collection – from *Mario Kart 64* to *Pilotwings* – you could buy an American NTSC machine, and literally 'make' the money back by buying such games on second-hand import. It's important to note, however, that brand-new import games tend to cost between fifty and sixty pounds. It can be an expensive business...

US sample prices (Second hand)

1080 Snowboarding	35
Aero Fighters Assault	25
Banjo & Kazooie	35
Bio Freaks	38
Blast Corps	18
Chameleon Twist	28
Clayfighter 63/3	10
Cruis'n USA	20
Dark Rift	25
Diddy Kong Racing	25
Doom 64	15
Duke Nukem 64	18
Extreme G	15
F1 Pole Position 64	12
FIFA 64	15
FIFA RTTWC 98	28
Fighters Destiny	18
Forsaken	38
Goldeneye	30
Hexen 64	15
ISS 64	20
Killer Instinct Gold	25
Lamborghini 64	22
Mace: The Dark Age	20
Madden 98	25
Mario 64	20
Mario Kart 64	20
Mischief Makers	25
Mission impossible	32
Mortal Kombat 4	35
Mystical Ninja	30
Nagano Winter Olympics	20
NBA Hangtime	22
NFL Quarterback Club '98	20
Pilotwings 64	25
Quake	18
Quest 64	32
San Francisco Rush	22
Shadows of the Empire	22
Starfox 64 (w/o rumble)	18
Starfox 64 (with rumble)	25
Tetrisphere	22
Top Gear Rally	25
Turok	12
War Gods	18
Waverace 64	22
Wayne Gretzky 98	30
WCW VS NWO World Tour	22
World Cup 98	38
Yoshi's Story	28

Japanese sample prices (Second hand)

1080 Snowboarding	35
Blast Corps	18
Bomberman 64	12
Diddy Kong Racing	25
Dual Heroes	25
F-Zero X	38
Go-Go-Troublemakers	18
Goemon Warrior 64	30
Golden Fighter	30
Goldeneye	30
Human Grand Prix	15
King of Pro Baseball	35
Mario 64	15
Mario Kart 64	15
Pilotwings 64	15
Shadows of the Empire	22
Snowbo Kids	25
Starfox 64 (w/o rumble)	10
Starfox 64 (with rumbe)	20
Turok	25
Wave Race 64	20
Wild Chopppers	28
World Soccer 3	28
Yoshi's Story	15

Buying second-hand games

Like it or not, N64 games are expensive. Without fail, you'll have to pay top dollar for new releases, but if you're thinking of buying a game that's been around for a couple of months, it's worth finding it as a second-hand game...

Second hand? Won't it be soiled, and ruined?

Of course not. Stores that sell second-hand games check each one to ensure it works. And, in the unlikely event a cart Is faulty, they'll be perfectly prepared to take it back. They have reputations to think of, don't they?

So where can I buy a second-hand game from?

Of the 'main' high-street game stores, only Electronics Boutique offer a second-hand service. Their prices aren't bad, but you could probably find games cheaper if you find a local independent store. You know the one – tucked away in a back alley, with loads of kids loitering outside. And a school day, too. Tsk.

So I can save a lot, then?

God, yes. Generally, the longer the game has been on the market, the cheaper it'll be. The opposite, obviously, applies, but you can find some surprising bargains. A game without its original packaging, for example, should be shockingly cheap.

Can you give me a few examples?

Yes. Here's a brief list of prices from mail order firm Department 1. Like those in the Import guide, these go out of date quickly, so it's worth giving them a call if you're curious about a particular game.

Second-hand price guide

1080 Snowboarding	35
Aero Fighters Assault	25
Banjo & Kazooie	32
Blast Corps	20
Bomberman 64	18
Chameleon twist	28
Clayfighter 63/3	18
Diddy Kong Racing	25
Doom 64	18
Duke Nukem 64	22
Extreme G	22
F1 Pole Position 64	15
FIFA 64	15
FIFA RTTWC 98	28
Fighters Destiny	25
Forsaken	30
Goldeneye	30
Hexen 64	15
ISS 64	15
ISS 98	25
Killer Instinct Gold	28
Lamborghini 64	25
Lylat Wars (with rumble)	30
Lylat Wars (w/o rumble)	22
Mace: The Dark Age	25
Madden 98	25
Mario 64	25
Mario Kart 64	30
Mischief Makers	25
Mission Impossible	25
Mystical Ninja	32
Nagano Winter Olympics	22
NBA Hangtime	22
NFL Quarterback Club '98	20
NHL Breakaway '98	28
Pilotwings 64	25
Quake	25
San Francisco Rush	25
Shadows of the Empire	25
Snowbo Kids	25
Tetrisphere	20
Top Gear Rally	25
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War Gods	18
Waverace 64	28
WCW VS NWO World Tour	25
World Cup 98	30
Yoshi's Story	30

Chapter three

The cream of N64 playing tips

Body Harvest

Weapons cheat

Enter your name as ICHEAT then start a new game. During play, press Down-C, Up, Z, Z, Right-C and Right.

Bust-a-Move 2 ARCADE EDITION

New bubble formations in Puzzle mode

At the game select screen, press L, up on the D-pad, R and down on the D-pad. Once you've done this, something should appear towards the bottom of the screen. Under Puzzle Game, you'll see the text 'Another World'. Press A to select. (Note: we've also heard that pressing A, Up, B and Down at the title screen gives extra puzzles, too. Lamentably, as some muppet has borrowed the office copy, we've not been able to test it. But give it a whirl, nonetheless).

Duke Nukem 64 (16)

Make Duke invincible by entering Right Shoulder, Right-C, Right Shoulder, Left Shoulder, Right Shoulder three times and left on the D-pad. You should do this on the main menu screen.

FIFA '98: RTTWC98

To skip to the World Cup without that tiresome qualilfying business, go to Vancouver's screen in Player Edit. Change one of the names to ANATOCI, and you need never – for example – lose in Stockholm or draw at Wembley to feeble opposition. Bah.

F-1 World Grand Prix

Get the Gold Racer

Enter Exhibition mode, and select Driver Williams. Now change his name to "Pyrite". Return to the start screen, then go back to exhibition mode. A new Gold Driver will be available in Exhibition, Time Trial and two-player modes.

Bonus track

Enter Exhibition mode, and select Driver Williams. Now change his name to "Vacation". Return to the start screen, then go back to exhibition mode. A new Hawian course will appear after the European Grand Prix.

Get the Silver racer

Enter Exhibition mode, and select Driver Williams. Now change his name to "Chrome". Return to the start screen, then go back to exhibition mode. A new Gold Driver will be available in Exhibition, Time Trial and two-player modes.

Madden 64

New stadiums

At the Create Player screen, type in San Mateo – it's EA's hometown, apparently – to get the secret EA stadia. You can also create a player called MAITLAND to get the Tiburon sports complex. Sounds more like a secret weapon in a sci-fi film to us, but who are we to mock?

New teams

Create players with the following names in Season mode to get new teams in Exhibition mode.
TIBURON – All Madden
AT MADDEN – All-Star Team
SIXTIES – 1960s team, in hippy garb. Honest. *
SEVENTIES – 1970s team, in disco gear. No, really...*
EIGHTIES – 1980s team. And they're dressed up as New Romantics. Simon Le Bon plays quarterback.*
ELEC ARTS – The EA Sports Team. In elephant suits.*
*Lies. All lies. But if only it did...

"A masterpiece... I nearly smiled. Twice."

James Ashton

"#§¶™#△# brilliant."

Tim Weaver

Ya! Tasty like Lurpak, yes?"

Jes Bickham







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